WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

VOL. VII.] DECEMBER, 1891. [No. 12.

☞ By adding fifty cents to their own subscription any of our subscribers (for $1.50) can have this magazine sent to some friend or acquaintance for the coming year. An added dollar will send it to two friends. Fractional parts of a dollar may be sent in two-cent postage stamps.

☞ Volume VII is to be bound uniformly with preceding volumes and will be sent post-free to any address for $1. The series of seven volumes will be sent free to any address for $5; any four volumes for $3, or any three for $2.

For an additional fifty cents we send *The Fire of God's Anger* or *Mystery of Creation and of Man* with any order either for the magazine or for the bound volumes. One of the best ways of helping us in this work is to order these volumes.

☞ The close of the year should bring up all arrears. A blue cross on the wrapper indicates who are delinquent.

ONE MORE YEAR.

We have determined to go on with this magazine for another year. We have received strong appeals to do so.

A few friends have offered to assist us. We hope that there will be others sufficiently impressed with the importance of this work to take part with us in sustaining it. At all events, we have determined to assume the responsibility of another volume and our subscribers may rely upon its completion. If for any unforeseen reason we should be unable to complete it, we shall return to those who may be disposed to aid it the just proportion of their contributions.

We would again remind our friends that not one dollar contributed to this magazine inures to our personal profit; it only diminishes the burden of the publication and aids us in giving it a wider circulation.

What chiefly determines us, however, to go forward is that we have not been able to escape the conviction that this magazine has before it a work too important to be abandoned, and a field of its own, which is occupied by no other agency. It has not indeed yet commanded the attention of the Church sufficiently to compel any widespread discussion of its doctrine. But it has sown widely the seed of its gospel of resurrection. And the time of fruitage must come. Our God is never in a hurry. His work is always slow and silent, but sure. We believe that we have been doing His work. From among a number of letters received, we give extracts on another page which show that we are not alone in this belief. Moreover, we agree with the opinion of the London *Free Christian*, expressed in reference to the discontinuance of this magazine, that the number of publications in this field is so few that not one can be spared. We go further and say that the peculiar field this magazine has sought to

occupy is not covered by any other publication at home or abroad. Nor can it be covered by any denominational journal, or by a leader who is hampered by obligation to any special section of the Church or pledged to the defense of any fixed line of theological thought. There must be freedom from any other obligation than that of unselfish devotion to the truth and to the interests of the whole Church.

The present need of the Church is an eschatology, scriptural and rational and scientific, commending itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. The lack of this blunts all the weapons of her warfare. Our work has been an endeavor to supply this need. The ability to carry it on to this point has come from God. We take it up again with the conviction that He will not suffer it to fail. Our hope is that the time is not far distant when He will raise up other and better channels for the diffusion of the truths which it has been our mission to proclaim, and of which the Church at this time is in great need. When that time comes we shall gladly accept relief.

THE BEST EXPLANATION.

No satisfactory explanation has yet been suggested of the fact that the Old Testament is almost silent upon the question of a future life. In the whole system of rewards and penalties, set forth in the Pentateuchal law, there is no appeal to what awaits men in the life to come. For right doing, men are promised rewards in this life to themselves and their seed after them. For wrong doing

they were to be visited with curses here upon themselves and their households. The book of Deuteronomy completely sets forth this law, and the twenty-eighth chapter sums it up in a most striking way. The devotional parts of the Old Testament—the Psalms, and the prophetic books—base their instructions and appeals upon the same principle. The only distinct promises of blessing for the righteous beyond this life are such as identify them with the future blessing of their seed and nation. Now and then this promise indeed glows with the light of a resurrection hope, as for example, in Isaiah xxvi, 12–19, where Israel is represented as in travail pangs for the world's deliverance, or in Daniel xii, where the prophet is told that he should stand in his lot at the end of the days when Michael should stand up for the children of his people, and the righteous sleepers in the dust of the earth should awake to everlasting life. But here, as everywhere, the hope of the individual is bound up with that of the nation in which his own life and destiny are embosomed, while the nation is always viewed as a single existence, whose corporate life extends from generation to generation.

What then is the true explanation of this reticence all through the Old Testament concerning reward for the righteous and penalty for the wicked in a life to come? Why are the intimations so few and so meagre that there is such a future life? It is because of this very principle of identity between the life of the individual and that of his descendants. His reward or penalty was to be continued in them. His judgment therefore was still to be on the earth. It was to be realized in earthly blessings or

curses. His conception of reward and punishment was confined to this sphere, because this law of solidarity of race confines it here. The pious Jew could not possibly fall into the mistake of what is nowadays reproachfully called "other-worldliness." He was taught that his interests, his destiny, his reward, lie here, and that they were to be fulfilled in the future blessing of his own people. Christianity indeed is a great advance upon this idea, but it does not repudiate it. It also binds up in one bundle the salvation of the individual with that of the world. First, its chosen people, the body of Christ, are not saved separately but together. The individual must fill up the measure of his sufferings for the whole that the whole may rejoice together. And the elect come not to the full fruition of their inheritance until the race to which they belong is prepared to have God's tabernacle set up with men on the new earth, and "they shall be His people" (Rev. xxi).

The true explanation then of this progressive revelation —silent so long about mysteries which we should have thought would have been put in the forefront—is furnished by this principle of solidarity of race. The race has one life. The continuation of the life of the individual is in some way connected with that of his kindred and people. His heaven of reward and his hell of punishment are being wrought out, and are to be finally realized here. Those who have passed beyond the bounds of this life are far more closely held within these bonds and far more closely identified with the living present than we have hitherto imagined. The dead lives that we thought vanished are

here repeating themselves in the living. There are more wonders embosomed in this world of humanity that encircles us than have yet been dreamed of in our theology. The earthly interests that we have been despising as compared with heavenly interests are themselves the heavenly, or at least they are lifted up into that sphere when we take the right view of them and engage in them in the right spirit. The new style of Christian work for men, which the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes represents in London, and which he described in his recent addresses in this country, is seen to be a true departure, in that it seeks to save and bless men in their bodies as well as souls. The new spiritual philosophy, commonly called Christian Science, imperfect as it yet is, is seen to be pursuing a right end, in that it makes bodily and spiritual healing to be but a manifestation of the one saving health which shall be to all nations when God's ways are known upon earth. In brief, when the eyes of men are opened to the full meaning of this great principle—that right here, in the atomic depths of our existing humanity, are going on God's great processes of redemption, of resurrection, of retribution and reward, and that the goal toward which He is working is not the peopling of some distant region of the skies with the human race transformed into angels, but to people this earth with a redeemed humanity, purified from sin and disease, emancipated from death and transformed into His image, then our own relation to this divine plan, and to the whole race of which we form a part, and our own duties to our human brethren under it, and to mankind at large, will loom up before us in a new light.

THE GOSPEL TO THE DEAD.

There are two distinct intimations in the first epistle of St. Peter that our Lord proclaimed good tidings to the dead after He was "quickened by the Spirit." Such is the natural, common, and historic interpretation of these two passages (iii, 19 ; iv, 6). The only point at which we differ from this usual interpretation is that we refuse to locate the preaching in the interval between His death and resurrection, during which Scripture affirms that He was dead. His "quickening by the Spirit" was His resurrection (compare Ephes. ii, 5 ; Rom. viii, 11 ; and parallel passages). The gospel which he preached (the Greek word is heralded) to these spirits of the dead was the fact of His resurrection, conveying to them the hope of a resurrection. There was no new probation involved in this proclamation : there was only the pledge that these lost spirits would be restored to another earthly life. This would bring with it its own discipline and probation. For embodiment in flesh and blood necessarily would bring them under conditions of trial and judgment.

From this point of view the words of the apostle in the second passage are easily understood. This is the very fact that they assert, that the good tidings of Christ's resurrection were preached to these dead for this purpose, "that they might be *judged according to men in the flesh.*" What this phrase means is easily deducible, not only from the words themselves, which mean precisely this—that these dead were to be subjected to another process of judgment under the conditions of earthy manhood—but it is plain,

also, from the drift of thought through the whole context. Both of these chapters are occupied with this subject of trial and judgment in the flesh. A man must suffer in the flesh in order to cease from sin. The supreme example of Christ is appealed to as the one instance of complete victory in this trial. He "suffered for us in the flesh," being reproached and reviling not again, faithful even unto death. The apostle is throughout urging his fellow Christians to the same fidelity. Judgment under the conditions of fleshly manhood, to which Christ voluntarily subjected Himself for our salvation, is the thought governing all this part of the epistle. And Christ's victory under this trial had made Him the source of blessing and recovery, even to "spirits in prison." They were to have the opportunity of "living unto God in the spirit" through resurrection to another life in the flesh, in which they would pass through another process of judgment which might issue in final victory.

If this natural interpretation of this passage be admitted, we have at once a firm foothold in Scripture for the doctrine of reincarnation as the method of the resurrection of the unjust. The just man does not, of course, need to come back to life under such conditions of bondage and suffering, but, like Christ, rises at once above them into that region of triumphant and immortal manhood into which He was raised. But the unjust man must undergo another process of "judgment in the flesh" before he can live unto God in the spirit.

ANCESTRAL TRAITS.

No fact is more manifest in these strange lives of ours than this—that every human life is a product of a whole series of lives behind it, and that each of the series has contributed some disposition or trait which enters into the composite life we call our own. And yet these traits do not, we believe, pertain to the essential man in which lies our true individuality. The true being of every man is divine. It is in essence one with God, and is not a human composite. But the exterior man in which it is enshrined is thus derived through human channels, and is composite. The problem of salvation contemplates the ultimate personalization of the divine nature in man and its embodiment in a form that shall be in the likeness of God. To this final personal expression of God there may be contributed traits that have been transmitted and matured through a long series of previous lives. And this explains how it is that the divine man, in his progress toward this goal, may uplift and help forward those behind him whose traits he inherits. In overcoming and eliminating those traits that are evil, and in perfecting those that are good, he carries forward to completion the imperfect lives that preceded him. He clears away the obstacles to a more perfect expression of the divine nature of man in the peculiar type of manhood that is kindred to his own. The supreme example of this is found in the One Divine Man who is Kinsman and Head of the whole race. He made possible the realization of divine humanity in the whole. But every man who partakes of His

Spirit, and in whom He is being formed, becomes a lesser Christ to his lesser circle of human brethren. The Christ reproduces Himself, and carries on His redeeming work through these His members.

THE CHURCH AND LIBERTY OF THOUGHT.

The relation between order in the Church and spiritual liberty has not yet been properly defined. The Scriptures plainly teach that the Church is an orderly body, but it is the order of a living body and not of a dead mechanism. The mistake of the mediæval Church was in supposing that order and unity could be maintained only through an authoritative external organization. After the Protestant Reformation a similar mistake was made in the attempt to secure the same result through an authoritative exposition of all the leading articles of the Christian faith. Neither of these theories provide properly for the exercise within the body of that liberty which must prevail where the Spirit of the Lord is. The New Testament theory of the Church is that of a growing body. The means of growth are an increase in the knowledge of God and of His Son, Jesus Christ. Any assumption, therefore, that this knowledge is complete, that it can be compressed and set forth in a system of formulas from which there can be no deviation or appeal, conflicts with this first law of the constitution of the Church. It is the violation of this principle that has brought the Presbyterian Church to its present dilemma. Under the demand created within itself by the growing knowledge of God, it must either throw off the

yoke of its seventeenth-century Confession, or it must pursue its vain attempt to be consistent with the past by accomodating expositions and amendments that impeach its intellectual honesty and confuse its spiritual insight.

It was because that Church insisted upon stifling what we believed to be the liberty of the spirit—a liberty which we were anxious to make use of for its own benefit—that we were compelled to withdraw from it. An experience of seven years in this atmosphere of freedom convinces us that it is worth all it costs, and that even where it must be maintained in the loneliness and isolation to which the Church condemns those who assert it, it is still essential that some should submit to this ban, not only for their own spiritual integrity, but for the benefit of the whole body. We are aware of the dangers, as well as the trials, to which this independent position exposes one. Some men who have gone out have made shipwreck of the faith. And yet quite commonly their brethren who drove them out and left them to themselves are equally responsible for this result. But such a result is impossible where Christian liberty is asserted and exercised with a view to the benefit of the whole body. Any man who in thought or feeling divorces himself from the interests of his brethren, becomes at once liable to danger. There is no place for the action of selfish or spiteful or ambitious motives in the Church of God. But if one takes the place of liberty because devotion to the Master—who was the first great exemplar of this principle of separation—and because the interests of the whole body require it, then there can be no danger in the issue of such a course. It is only an instance of the supreme law, "And we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren."

The Church can never attain to its ideal state until she makes provision within herself for the exercise of just this kind of liberty. She must refuse to build herself up upon the idea that because the "faith has once for all been delivered to the saints," that she has yet comprehended all that faith contains. If this were so, why has she not attained unto that "unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God" which St. Paul (Ephes. iv, 11–13) declares to be the purpose of her divine Head, in raising up within her a diversified ministry? The fact that she is still far from this unity is *prima facie* evidence that she is yet far from the goal of this perfect knowledge. To refuse to her ministers, who may have been endowed by the Spirit for this very purpose, the opportunity to investigate and to reverently set forth any new and larger views into which they may have been led, is to deny the first principle of her constitution as a living organism, and to quench within her the Spirit. If it be replied that she would then have no safety nor protection against all sorts of heretical and dangerous opinions, we answer that the same liberty which gave scope for such opinions would also make sure their correction. Such a view implies want of confidence in the self-corrective rule within the body of the Spirit of God. Moreover, such extravagances of teaching are impossible in a body where the divine Spirit is honored and His rule and restraint duly recognized. What the Church needs to specially guard herself against is heresies of life and conduct in her ministers. If she discover in them pride and self-seeking in their teaching, she may well rebuke them. But if there be no evidence of these and kindred vices of the mind, she can and ought to trust them in any reverent endeavor on their

part to lead her out into larger views of truth. If our divine Head promised to send the Spirit to guide us into all truth, to reveal the "many things" which even His chosen disciples were not yet prepared for, and to show us things to come, how is it possible that the Spirit can discharge this function in the body, except as He raises up and qualifies men through whom He can speak, and who must be pioneers and leaders into these larger pastures? If, therefore, she adopt the principle of creed-subscription at all, she must content herself with a creed that sets forth only the prime facts of the Christian faith, or else she must make her creed so flexible as to provide within itself for such necessary enlargement as shall make room for that growth in divine knowledge which is the one essential means for her perfection in unity, and her reaching up to "the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ."

THE CASE OF DR. BRIGGS.

As is well known, the initial attempt to secure the condemnation of Professor Briggs by the Presbytery has failed and the case in that court has been dismissed. We are glad of this. Ecclesiastial liberty has been greatly promoted by this result. The Presbyterian Church will make great gain by it in the direction of free investigation and a wider faith and hope. At the same time we cannot wholly approve of the way in which this result was attained.

On the part of the Presbytery it is due less to a desire for the vindication of the truth than to the fear of injury

to the Church through a protracted and bitter controversy. And on the part of Dr. Briggs, while the most of the charges were met in a frank and manly way, we cannot say this of them all. Among his disavowals we find the following:

"If the specification had pointed to any erroneous doctrine taught by me; if I had been charged with teaching second probation or any probation whatever after death, I might have pointed to several of my writings in which this doctrine is distinctly disclaimed. If the doctrine of purgatory had been imputed, or regeneration after death, or transition after death from the state of the condemned to the state of the justified, any and all of these could have been disproved from my writings. If any insinuation had been made that I had taught that the redeemed enter the middle state guilty and sinful, this could easily have been refuted. But no such doctrines are specified."

The impression made by this statement is that Dr. Briggs disclaims all sympathy with any theory of post-mortem salvation. After reading his volume called *Whither* we cannot give him credit here for disingenuousness. It is true that Dr. Briggs nowhere in his writings distinctly teaches second probation. But he does plainly teach that this life is not a probation, and, therefore, if men were to be reached by any process of salvation beyond death, this could not be termed a *second* probation, because there never had been a first. In fact, he seems to hold that men are both lost in Adam and saved in Christ without an individual probation. We quote from *Whither*, pp. 217–222:

"The doctrine that this life is a probation was not known to the Reformers or the Westminister divines. It is a doctrine that is inconsistent with Calvinistic principles.

These represent that our race had a probation once for all in Adam at the beginning of human history, and were condemned for failure in that probation, so that we are a lost race, not under probation, but under a curse and needing above all things redemption through Jesus Christ. . . .

"The Scriptures and the Confession alike have the underlying doctrine that this life is not a probation, and therefore there are no reasons presented in them for bringing this probation to a halt at death. It may be that there is no hope of regeneration after death, or of the initiation of the order of salvation in the middle state, but this is a very different doctrine from the doctrine that human probation ends with death. . . .

"We must admit that the innumerable millions of heathen who have passed into the middle state have had no real probation. They have had sufficient of the light of nature to condemn them as sinners. But the Confession teaches that they have no light of nature sufficient to save them, and they have had no offer of the grace of the Gospel. Such a condition of affairs is no probation—they have had no opportunity whatever of salvation according to the Westminster scheme. . . .

"Calvinists must give up this contra-confessional doctrine altogether, and recover their position on the Westminster doctrine of original sin and redemption. The question we have to determine as Calvinists is whether the divine grace is limited in its operation to this world of ours, whether the divine act of regeneration may take place in the middle state or not, whether any part of the order of salvation is carried on there or not, and if any part, what part. We have already seen that the divine grace is not confined to this world, that sanctification by the divine grace must continue in the middle state. But we see no reason why the divine grace may not regenerate all the elect before they leave this world. If the divine grace may be applied to the millions of infants dying in infancy, why not also to millions of adult heathen. . . .

"It is evident that in the whole field of Eschatology there is great perplexity in the minds of the theologians and the ministry, as well as of the people. The middle state must be opened up in the discussions that are in progress. There must be the fullest liberty in this debate. Those who depart from the Confession in the way of narrowness, limiting the grace of God, cannot in the name of orthodoxy condemn those who are more generous in their views of the operation of the divine grace in the middle state."

Now while these quotations do not fasten upon Dr. Briggs the belief that men may be reached by the saving grace of God beyond death, they certainly look very strongly that way. They at least hint that, as men were lost without individual trial, they may be saved in the same way. And they give no shadow of reason why the grace which brings this salvation should be estopped by death. The implication is all the other way. And therefore we say that Dr. Briggs's disclaimer that his views on these points are in no sense heretical by Presbyterian Standards is hardly ingenuous.

But it was not so much to convict Dr. Briggs of inconsistency that we make these quotations. We desire once more to show in what confusion the minds of even advanced thinkers in the Presbyterian Church remain on this subject. Their ever-pressing obligation to remain consistent with the Confession on these points obscures their vision of the whole subject. Dr. Briggs is not the only one of their distinguished leaders who may be quoted on both sides of this question. Strange it is that at this point of Eschatology they are most sensitive to the charge of heresy, and yet this is just the region where they all say

they are most in need of light. And yet no one has been bold enough to ask for revision here.

We submit to our readers whether the explanation we have given of these dark questions is not more satisfactory than these halting opinions of Dr. Briggs. And they are so because we began by repudiating the pernicious error upon which the whole damnatory scheme of the Confession is built, namely, that the resurrection of the unjust is to them an infinite curse. The provision for their resurrection is on its face, and in its very nature, a redemptive operation extended beyond death. We so far agree with Professor Briggs as to say that it is not necessary to view this as a second probation. And we have of late gone further and asserted that it is not necessary to locate its operation in some unknown "middle state." We have found that the unjust can be restored to life only on the earthly plane, which is necessarily that of restraint and judgment, and that therefore they are probably restored by rebirth to another life on the earth. Such a view cuts the ground from under all the ordinary objections to an extension of probation, and fixes the place for gospel preaching to both quick and dead here in this sphere of earth and time. But whether or not mistaken as to the when and how of this resurrection, the fact that it is redemptive in its design, and gracious in its opportunity, is the morning-star that lights up the gloom of this whole subject. And Professor Briggs, and the great Church to which he belongs, must continue to stumble in this whole domain of eschatology, or still worse to remain sunk in the slough of despond into which their Confession has cast them until they open their minds to this gift of the morning-star.

THE TRUTH-PRINCIPLE.—"The necessary, everlasting, ideal distinction between the true and the false can as little be debated, in a way of opinion, as the idea of space: it is absolute. If, now, any moral being accept this truth-principle, to live for the truth and by it, he becomes a principled man as regards all truth, in distinction from an unprincipled or non-principled man. He is not settled, of course, in the knowledge of all particular truths. He may err a long time in opinions, or matters of fact, but being in the truth principle, sworn to seek, and serve, and live and die for the truth, he is polarized in that principle, and will settle his vibrations closer and closer, in all his discriminations, determinations, and faiths. Being fixed in the principle of truth-seeking, he is just so far a true man; whereas there are multitudes of men, it may be, holding vastly more true judgments and opinions and fewer errors than he, who are yet only governed by the market, or the school, or the Church, and are really not true men at all, because there is no immutable first principle in them of devotion to the truth for the truth's sake. They are clocks set by all other clocks, and not dials set for the sun."

"No man really believes in God, as in practical trust, in distinction from only believing some propositional matter concerning Him, without having God verified to him as by consciousness—substance in substance—and then he will as certainly be fixed in the sense of his own ever-duringness; which ever-duringness is not the opinion, reasoned or gotten up, of his own immortality, but the sense, in fact, of being down upon, in, and of the immutable."

"There are some who will never get away from things far enough to embrace principles till some final sweep of

calamity sweeps all things away; never come unto God till, by some great storm, they are virtually wrecked on Him. Then for the first time, when they touch Him, so to speak, with their feet, and rest on Him, do they begin to know what a coming to land it is to trust Him. All true born souls are brought ashore in this manner, on the continental principles of duty and religion. What we call the world-element, unsteady and mutable as the sea, is no finality for them, but they are put in it, as a merely transitional chapter, to be inducted and pressed inward and downward, upon real foundations—the immutable, the immortal."—*Rev. Horace Bushnell, D. D.*

"THE OFFENCES OF OUR FOREFATHERS."—In the impressive litany of the Episcopal Church, in which the Church has voiced her petitions from the early centuries, there occurs this prayer: "Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers." In this last expression we find a testimony, of which most of those who use this prayer in our day are not aware, to that phase of Christian doctrine and hope we have been advocating, namely, that we now bear a burden from the sins of our ancestors, and that, by our confidence in God's mercy and humble obedience to His will, we may obtain remission not only for ourselves, but for them. This petition for ourselves is also a prayer for them. And it has found place in this ancient formula because, by the divine constitution of human nature we are one with them in the bearing of sin and in deliverance from its consequences.

THE WAY of return to God is closed against no one who does not close it against himself; therefore, those who have not yet closed it against themselves, in that the means of Salvation, the Redemption of Christ, has not yet been offered to them, will indisputably hereafter, when beyond the limits of this earthly life, be placed in a condition to enter upon this way of return to God if they choose.

The same opportunity is open to those to whom, although belonging to the outer sphere of the Christian Church, the real nature of the gospel has nevertheless not been presented.—*Julius Muller.*

THE scientific view of man and the Scripture view come into complete accord when we discover that man is, in essence, a child of God, and, therefore, an heir of immortality, but that this essential man is being trained for this high destiny, and lifted on to it, by passing through successive forms of imperfect existence which involve trial and discipline, and that thus he is building up that perfect personality which shall be the express image of God. It is thus seen that no treasures of his present life can abide, but such as are laid up in heaven, and that even his present personality can survive only so far as it becomes incorporated into Christ and reflects His image.

ANGLO-ISRAEL.—If our friends who have taken up with the Anglo-Israel idea would give up their efforts to trace back the line of descent through "endless genealogies," and find instead the missing-link of their theory in a doctrine of re-incarnation, their whole system would be much more plausible.

It would be also more Scriptural, for it would make the promises to a future Israel on which they build their theory to be fulfilled—not to some very remote descendants—but to the men to whom they were made.

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

APPROVAL.—The London *Free Christian* reprints with approval the article in our October number on "The Solidarity of the Race," and commends us for calling the attention of the Church to this weighty subject so generally overlooked. It says:

"The thought that just as the consequences of sins are transmitted by heredity, so the well-doing of the descendants redound to the benefit of those who have passed away, is one full of hope and comfort as well as encouragement, especially in relation to our ancestral dead, and consistent with the teaching of the Church, that as the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, so mercy is shown unto thousands in them that keep God's commandments."

Our brother editor speaks also very kindly and regretfully concerning the contemplated suspension of this magazine, as follows:

"We can confirm the editor's remark that few know the labor and expense of maintaining a religious periodical which has no party behind it nor the profits of advertisement to sustain it, and many will read with approval where few only will subscribe.

"The number of publications of this character is not so many that one can be spared. Our dear brother has borne the burden of this for some seven years, and those who have had the benefit of its pages will sustain a loss if now it has to cease for want of support.

"If a few brethren from this distant land were to send kindly words of encouragement, with a year's subscription, it might cheer our brother's heart, and determine him to continue in his work, and be a benefit to the Church at large."

PROFESSOR BRIGGS, in his address before the New York Chamber of Commerce, spoke very breezily of the reformation now

going on in the domain of theology, and of how the truth must be sifted out of that which is old and traditional, but so long as he feels compelled to profess subjection to so much that is old and traditional, he incapacitates himself to become a trusted leader in this movement.

CORRECTION.—A friend has sent to us a copy of the Rev. Dr. Duffield's explanation of President Patton's address on Future Probation. We are satisfied that, in common with most notices in the public press, our own notice did Dr. Patton the injustice of attributing to him a sentence which he used only as descriptive of the Andover view. We have seen no denial, however, of this expression:—"There is no doctrine which is put in jeopardy by the simple affirmation of this belief."

We think these words sufficiently justify our own temperate criticism of the address.

WHAT IS LIFE?—The *New York Herald* of Nov. 8th printed a symposium of replies to this question. The principal one of these was by Edison, the renowned inventor. Mr. Edison disclaims any pretense of being a philosopher, but he still ventures a scientific opinion on this subject. He asserts his belief that every material atom is, in its measure, conscious and intelligent, and that the human body is an aggregation of such innumerable atoms, the sum of whose intelligence and activity is the measure of the man's intelligence. The German Lotze improves upon this idea when he defines the soul as the persistent, dominant atom.

This view, that all molecular force and movement is intelligent, and that life pervades everything, is a growing conviction among the men of science. And that whole troops and hosts of conscious organisms go to make up the structure and perform the functions of the human body is a well-known fact of science. Human life would thus seem to be the product of an immense aggregate of inferior lives, and the human body seems to contain unsounded heights and depths of being.

All this well accords with our more recent views of the nature of man as the consummate product of the whole series of lives

behind him, and as providing room in the atomic depths of his being in which the ancestral lives from which he sprang, and that have now vanished, may be treasured up and carried on to some period when they shall be prepared for re-embodiment.

Every embodied human soul dominates a whole empire of life, in which many souls who have passed out of the body may find refuge and a foothold for future recovery to another experience of embodied life. While those who have fought the good fight of faith and laid hold of *eternal* life become henceforth the conquerors and lords of this whole realm of life and the deliverers of others who are yet under bondage to the rudimental forces that govern the course of this world and bring the forms of life it develops under the yoke of its law of change and corruption.

STILL IN THE DARK.—It is sad that good honest Christians feel compelled to speak of any doctrine from God that Jesus taught as "appalling." The New York correspondent of the *Presbyterian* writes thus: "The thought of eternal punishment is indeed appalling It gave an intense earnestness to Christ's preaching and Paul's ministry." He quotes also a saying of Mr. Beecher during his early ministry when wrestling with this "terrible fact of the future:" "I look on the unpitied nations of the globe, and with inexpressible longing and anguish for which there is no word, I have sought relief."

Upon this we have to remark:

1. If we are the offspring of God, by no possible warrant of Scripture or of reason have we a right to think that He is such a Father or Governor as these words imply. No punishment that He inflicts can be inconsistent with this relation, and no revelation of it can so transcend the limits of what our own judgments and consciences approve as to be "appalling." Orthodox people continually speak of the doctrine of future punishment as shocking to their moral sensibilities. This is the main reason why it is so little preached. This, of itself, proves that their conception of the doctrine cannot be right.

2. It is a sheer assumption to say that this conception of divine retribution "gave an intense earnestness to Christ's preaching

and to the ministry of Paul." It cannot be proved from the New Testament that our Lord ever preached to the masses who followed Him the doctrine of endless existence in suffering. Every one of the passages upon which this doctrine is based is drawn from His private teaching of disciples when they were withdrawn from the multitude (compare Mark ix, 43–50 with verse 33). This is especially true of the noted passage in which the words rendered in the English version, "eternal punishment," occur. The whole discourse was spoken in reply to a question which "Peter and James and John and Andrew asked Him privately" (Mark xiii, 1–3; Matt. xxiv, 3). If Jesus was so intensely burdened with the thought of such a doom overhanging the masses, why have we no proof that He made it prominent in His discourses to *them?* The fact is, He never attached the idea to punishment in hell which was afterward foisted upon it, especially by the Latin Church.

It is equally false to assume that St. Paul's ministry was loaded with this burden. We challenge any man to produce from his sermons or epistles a single passage which fairly proves that he viewed man as liable to endless suffering in hell. The strongest passage of all (II Thess. ii, 9) speaks of "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." But destruction is not endless existence in misery. And, as the context shows that he is speaking of a punishment to be inflicted on men living on the earth at Christ's coming, the question is still left open, whether the promised resurrection of all mankind from death, which is the wages of sin, may not bring with it a redemptive blessing. The word rendered, "everlasting," as every Greek scholar knows, does not exclude the hope of recovery from this "destruction" in some age to come. Or, even admitting the idea that the destruction of these ungodly men is irrevocable, the question still is open, whether an ungodly man may not be thus "judged according to men in the flesh," to the complete destruction of his personality as a carnal man, and yet live again "according to God in the spirit" (I Peter iv, 6).

THE PRESBYTERY OF ALLEGHENY, in its recent dealing with the case of Rev. J. H. Bausman, gives another illustration of the

irrepressible conflict which the old doctrine creates in every spiritually enlightened soul.

This brother had been arraigned because "the burden of this belief" was too great for him to carry without expressing dissent in private, although refraining from it in public. The Presbytery, while rebuking this, itself confesses in its report that this is "a terrible truth," and that one cannot avoid feeling this burden:

This may extend so far as to cause us to shrink from preaching that terrible truth, as a kind-hearted physician shrinks from applying the knife to the diseased member of his patient. We are all human, and some of the doctrines of the Divine Word are exceedingly profound, and we cannot comprehend them, and some of them are exceedingly distasteful to the natural man, and we find it hard to receive them.

It is not the just way to put the case to assume that it is the natural man only who is repugnant to this doctrine. Some of the most spiritual persons we have known rejected it. Their aversion was due to the fact that they could not reconcile it with all their best thoughts of God as derived from His Word and His Spirit dwelling within them. The more loving of God and of their fellow-men they became, the less were they able to receive it.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A correspondent, whose criticisms we receive with great respect, because he is a well-tried friend and himself a master in biblical learning, and a teacher of others, writes in review of the teaching of the November number as follows:

Your views emphasize the significance of this present life and surcharge it with eternal potencies. Yet I can't think your scheme through, because of certain dim spots to my weak grasp of the matter. If men here are in a struggle for the survival of the (spiritually) fittest, some, in what you call personal forms which are likely to survive—that is, with sufficient goodness attained to make their reaching the goal probable, and others, in degraded forms, with only a germ of true humanhood, fast being submerged, in them; then it follows that if the arena of such struggle is *here*,

and it has been going on so long, their progress through reincarnation must have had many set-backs and with an advance extremely slow; or new souls also (creationism) are continually being started along the path, and present men (living or dead) are not the whole "soul-stuff."

To this we reply that if we accept Professor Le Comte's explanation of the evolutionary mode by which souls are raised above the sphere of animal life and individuated as spiritual beings on the human plane, the constant introduction of new souls into the human sphere, and on the path to immortality is explained without resorting to the hypothesis of creationism.

But aside from this, we have to say of our correspondent's impression of our views that he gives them a pessimistic aspect we never intended. We did not state anything to justify his vision of a degraded mass of humanity in whom true humanhood was fast being submerged. On the contrary, we sought to present a picture of mankind as always on the ascending scale. Progress may be slow to our view, but not in His with whom a thousand years are as one day.

Our friend needs to distinguish between that which is individual in man and that which is personal. The first word belongs to what man is in *essence*. His true and inmost being, his higher self, is indestructible because divine. But "personality" defines not essence, but existence, not the subjective individual, but the objective manifestation. Hence personality becomes immortal only as the objective expression answers to man's true and inmost being. It is on this ground that we are able to conceive of the same individual human spirit as taking on successive personalities through reincarnation, until the perfect form of manhood is reached, and finally gathering up into his completed personality all the experience and memories and all the enduring qualities of character acquired through all previous existences. We say this because our correspondent, later on in his letter (which is too long to quote at length), complains that our theory tends to destroy individuality. We say that successive personalities do not at all conflict with true individuality, since we make it to reside not in that sphere of man's existence which is outward and changing,

but in that interior sphere where man bears the divine image, and where his life is hid in God.

Another of our friend's criticisms is that we seem to confine the whole discipline and training of human souls for the goal of divine manhood to this earthly sphere. He says:

There seems to be a weak spot in your theory, as to what you decide to be the chief arena for the perfection of human souls, viz. —this earth and life. It seems not big enough for your scheme. Further, it starts some queries about Christ's work. When He triumphed He "led captivity captive." What was the state of these captives? Had *they* not attained? Were they still imperfect? But they must attain, you say, through their own development. Yet His ascension set them *free*, and apparently perfected them at a stroke. Besides they were *behind the veil* when this was done, not here on the earth. Again you speak of the saints, the priesthood unto God, as like Christ in this respect that they too set their backward and captive brothers free. How, and where? What state are these brothers in? Again you speak of those "cut off early" as doing a work behind the veil. If they, *there*, why not others? . . . Where is the dividing line between these "bestial perishable forms of personality" and those who this side the grave are hopeful? Since so many die somewhat "evoluted," but only somewhat, must they come back to get perfected, or is their progress continued beyond? If theirs, why not others? Where is the line?

I think, therefore, that you contract your arena into something too small for the results to be worked out. We must have the *ages*, it seems to me, and the *universe* with its myriad "homes."

To all this we say that between those souls who "enter into life" when they pass from earth, and who go on *there* unto perfection, and those who must needs come back to earthly life for judgment and correction *here*, we "draw the line" precisely where the New Testament draws it, when it speaks of carnal (psychical) men and spiritual men, of just and unjust, of them "that have done good," and them "that have done ill," one of which classes "come forth unto the resurrection of life," the other to "the resurrection of judgment." Or, again, we find the line drawn between those who are "in Christ" and those out of Christ. In the one class there has been an awakening out of the sensual life, and a quickening of the divine germ which is in

every man with the Christ-life, so that the man has recognized and found his true relation to God as His son, and the partaker of His life. There are indeed all degrees of this saintship. Some, like Paul, reach the goal here, and know that, upon the dissolution of this earthly tabernacle, they shall pass at once into another house, eternal in the heavens. Other imperfect saints must pass into the condition which he calls "sleep," which we take to be not one of unconsciousness, but of repose and recuperation, and preparation for the perfect state.

We find no necessity in Scripture or in reason for the return of any of this class to the bondage of earthly discipline. Even if only babes in Christ, they are yet in Him, and so set with Him in that region of emancipated life into which He has gone, and where they must live also. But, for all on the other side of this line, we see the necessity of further trial or trials under the yoke of the creature, made subject to vanity and corruption. It is not, indeed, *essential* to this doctrine to hold that these trials and advances along the scale of life should be confined to this earth. There are, as our correspondent suggests, innumerable earths in this great universe. And the earthly condition of bondage to corruption may prevail in any or every one of them wherever the same degree of cosmic progress has been reached. And yet, while this point is not essential, we prefer to connect these further trials of human souls with the progress of the race on this earth, to which they belong, of whose races they still form a part, and with whose fortunes, by the Bible law of solidarity in race and kindred, and of redemption through a seed, their destiny is linked. The "ages to come" and the "many mansions" in our Father's great house, of which our correspondent speaks, we prefer to regard as spheres of activity and expansion to be occupied by men after they reach the heavenly stage, and not for the discipline of those who are yet on the earthly stage. For these, we find all the conditions necessary for their training here, until they come to the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, which knowledge, He tells us, will be their new birth into life eternal.

As to our brother's query, how this doctrine fits in with our

teaching about the priestly ministry of saintly souls to their imperfect brethren, living and dead, and where it is exercised, we have to say (1) that a system of vicarious suffering of the part for the whole runs through all nature and finds its supreme expression in man. Every higher type of life carries a burden from the lower and seeks to redeem and perfect it. In this way the "earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." (2) These sons of God are especially redeemers of their brethren. The Son of God carries on His work through other sons, who are His "brethren," "members of His body," the eyes and hands and feet who execute His offices of grace.

This work pre-eminently belongs to those saints who are now perfected and with Him in glory. He entered not fully upon His high priesthood until after His glorification. He is now by His Spirit fulfilling it through His members. So they must needs pass out into fullness of life and power through the gates of death before they become crowned kings and priests unto God. But just so far as the Christ-nature is formed in them in this mortal state, so far they anticipatively become instruments of His saving grace to men. If we are asked to define and track the ways by which the risen saints exercise now their priestly ministry, we can only say that it must be, in their smaller measure, after the pattern of their Head. If His ways of grace and power can be traced, so, also, can theirs, for they are the same. He acts through them. As in the highest and best sense of the word He now "possesses" men by His Spirit, so do the spirits of the good now also infuse light and strength into their needy brethren and "possess" them for the ends of their salvation. And, as for that portion of the Church who are here warring in the flesh, they, also, not only inspire and help their brethren, but the very conditions of their fighting the good fight of faith require that they shall carry a burden imposed upon them by the imperfect lives from which they sprang, and which they virtually continue, and which, by the mysterious laws of life which link us all in one, compel the advanced souls in this struggle to fight over the battles of life in

which their predecessors were worsted, to redeem their loss, and to carry them on to victory.

Of course, one must know all about the hidden laws that prevail in the whole domain of life to be able to explain the "how" and the "where" of this mystery. Our ignorance is ever ready with its objections. But of the fact itself of such priestly ministry by which glorified men succor those of us who are pressing forward to this prize of our high calling, and by which the earthly contestants for this prize fight over again the battles of their wounded and fallen brothers and bring them relief, we may be reasonably sure.

This relief we have stated to be their reinvestment in embodied life. The only kind of resurrection of which these "spirits in prison" are capable is a return to earthly life for further discipline. They must come again under judgment as "men in the flesh." The channels of their recovery are those living contestants of whom we have spoken, who take up the broken thread of their lives and prepare the way for their future manifestation. In this way they become "the seed of blessing," in whom the past kindreds of the earth are restored and blessed.

We have, from time to time, in this magazine, announced great principles, and have straightway met with objections, because we could not explain fully the "how" and the "where" these principles are applied. To do this we should need to "know all mysteries." But the principles, however, may be everlastingly true, and may be our only guide into these regions which they open up, and which are confessedly beyond our present power to explore.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

From a number of letters received urging us to go on with this magazine we have room for only the following:

A Congregational clergyman writes to us from Massachusetts:

"Think not for a moment that I do not cordially approve your more recent discussions in WORDS OF RECONCILIATION. It is

only to-day that I have been able to peruse the numbers of October and November. For more than a year I have been so burdened with work that I have failed to communicate with you as I have wanted to, or to express even by a postal the great satisfaction I have had in the progress you seem to be making in the formulation of a rational and scriptural Eschatology for the Christian Church. There is matter for deep study and meditation in those pregnant articles on "Universalism" and "The Evolution of Immortal Man" in the last number. I cannot think of your suspending the magazine at this juncture as anything else than a calamity to be deprecated by every lover of truth, and I beg you will not let it lapse until at least you have relieved your mind of the burden which it seems to me the Holy Spirit is putting upon you in the intelligent expression of thought which *must* find outlet at this juncture.

"I am sure that I speak now the minds of many: Don't abandon WORDS OF RECONCILIATION yet; and I inclose a trifle, which I wish were ten times more, to keep it in being a little longer.

"Yours with warmest sympathy and approval."

From a subscriber in Milwaukee:

"I see by the current number of WORDS OF RECONCILIATION that you may discontinue the publication of that magazine with the expiration of the present volume. I cannot say how sorry I shall be if you so determine. I have the volumes from No. 1, and they have been to me a source of incalculable benefit. They have opened up for me a line of thought which I would probably never have reached without them, and which has reconciled me to religion, or rather to true religion, as opposed to my former ideas of what religion was. This is a result which had to be accomplished for me by just the kind of thought that I found in your articles, and never could have been done in any other way. This is why I say that the magazine has been of incalculable benefit. I would be glad to welcome the WORDS to my home every month, and for many months to come, but of course you know best about the advisability of continuing the publication.

"I do not wish to urge you in any way, but I would like to remind you that you once proposed to discontinue, thinking, perhaps, that the mission of the magazine had been accomplished, and this was before you had written anything at all on the subject of the Solidarity of the Race. Perhaps I should say, before you had taken that subject up in an extended way. You now believe that to be one of the most important that you have opened up.

"Now I only want to suggest that perhaps if you continue in the field you may get still more light, not only on the subjects on

which you have already written, but on some new line which you have not as yet considered at all. Pardon me if I have presumed too much, and put it down to an error of the head and not of the heart, and believe me, when I say that whether you write or do not write, and whether I ever hear from you or of you again in this world, I owe to you that I have been enabled to recognize a Father in the God of my fathers. With kindest regards,

"Sincerely your friend.

"P.S. If the present volume is to be bound uniform with the others, I would like to have it."

PEIRCE CITY, MO., November 8th, 1891.

DEAR BRO. BAKER.—I am troubled over the prospect as touching the discontinuance of our grand little magazine, WORDS OF RECONCILIATION; and I sincerely hope *some* arrangement can be made whereby you can continue its publication, for to my mind it is growing better and better, and each number contains grander and deeper thoughts than the preceding. And could I extend to you the assistance necessary to keep it going, I would do it willingly, with the full understanding that you must remain free and unfettered in your liberty to inquire and teach along any line of truth you might choose, or, in other words, teach what *you* believe, not what I believe, unless, perchance, I might happen to believe just as you do. In fact, it is this very spirit of freedom and independence of thought, which I so much admire in your writings. And while I do not always agree fully with some of your conclusions, yet I usually say amen to your reasoning, for it is forcible, and usually is not lacking in both scriptural and experimental proof, especially to those who have given these same subjects a careful study; and while to some, your recent articles on the "how" of Christ's presence, the "how" of the resurrection of judgment, etc., may seem far-fetched and visionary, yet to my mind they are very close on the line of the "present truth," and the best and most reasonable and most practical explanations I have heard, and by no means as visionary as those views which claim that we know nothing of the "how" of each.

Yours in the love of the truth,

J. W. BRITE.